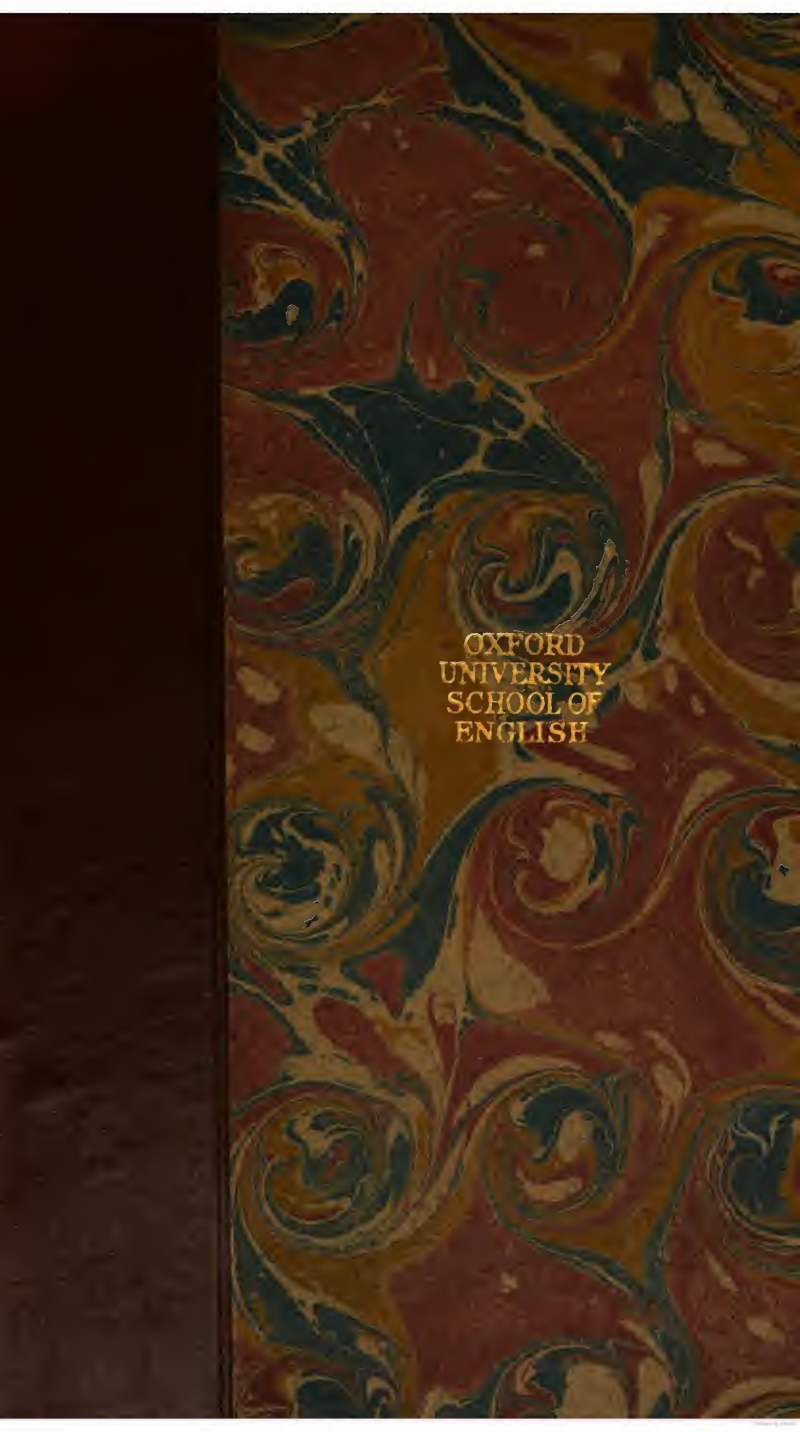
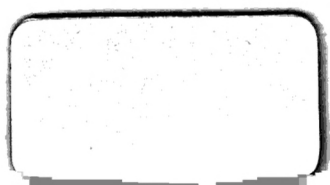


The image shows the front cover of a book. The spine, on the left, is a solid dark brown. The main cover area is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, featuring swirling, organic shapes in shades of deep red, ochre yellow, and dark blue/black. The text 'OXFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH' is printed in a gold-colored, serif, all-caps font, centered on the marbled background.

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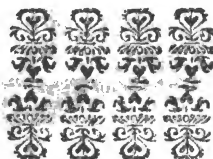
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A
LETTER
CONCERNING
ENTHUSIASM,
TO
My Lord *****.



L O N D O N,
Printed for J. Morphew near Stationers-
Hall. M. DCC. VIII.

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OFFICE OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1917

RECEIVED

TO THE
READER.

THIS Letter must have been written, as plainly appears, about the middle or latter end of last Summer ; and in all probability was design'd to be kept private. But tho it came afterwards to be seen abroad in several Hands, the Printer cou'd not obtain his Copy till very lately, or you had had it more in season.

READER.

THIS Letter must have been written, as plainly appears, about the middle of last year; and in the end of last summer; and in the probability was assigned to the right person. But how it came to be so long before it was published, the Editor could not obtain a copy till very late in the year; and it was in the year.

A
LETTER, &c.

My Lord,

NOW, you are return'd to
....., and before the
Season comes that must
engage you in the weigh-
tier Matters of State ; if you care
to be entertain'd a while with a sort
of idle Thoughts, that pretend only
to Amusement, and have no rela-
tion to Business or Affairs, you may
cast your Eye on what follows ; and
if

if there be any thing inviting, you may read it at your leisure.

IT has been an establish'd Custom for Poets, at the entrance of their Work, to address themselves to some Muse: and this Practice of the Antients has gain'd so much Repute, that in our days we find it almost constantly imitated. I cannot but fancy however, that this Imitation, which passes so currently with other Judgments, must at some time or other have stuck a little with your Lordship; who is us'd to examine Things by a better Standard than that of Fashion or the common Taste. You must certainly have observ'd our Poets under a remarkable Constraint, when oblig'd to assume this Character: and you have wonder'd, perhaps, why that Air of Enthusiasm which sits so gracefully with an Antient, shou'd

shou'd be so spiritless and aukard in a Modern. But as to this Doubt, your Lordship wou'd soon resolve your self: and it wou'd only serve to bring a-cross you a Reflection which you have often made, on many occasions besides ; *That Truth is the most powerful thing in the World,* since even Fiction it self must be govern'd by it, and can only please by its resemblance. The Appearance of Reality is necessary to make any Passion agreeably represented : and to be able to move others, we must first be mov'd our selves, or at least seem to be so, on some probable Grounds. Now what possibility is there that a Modern, who is known never to have worship'd *Apollo*, or own'd any such Deity as the Muses, shou'd persuade us to enter into his pretended Devotion, and move us by his feign'd Zeal in a Religion out
of

of date ? But as for the Antients, 'tis known they deriv'd both their Religion and Polity from the Muses Art. How natural therefore must it have appear'd in any, but especially a Poet of those times, to address himself in Raptures of Devotion to those acknowledg'd Patronesses of Wit and Science ? Here the Poet might with probability feign an Extasy, tho he really felt none : and supposing it to have been mere Affectation, it wou'd look however like something natural, and cou'd not fail of pleasing.

BUT perhaps, my Lord, there was a further Mystery in the case. Men, your Lordship knows, are wonderfully happy in a Faculty of deceiving themselves, whenever they set heartily about it : and a very small Foundation of any Passion will serve us, not only to act it well,

well, but even to work our selves into it beyond our own reach. Thus by a little Affectation in Love-Matters, and with the help of a Romance or Novel, a Boy of Fifteen, or a grave Man of Fifty, may be sure to grow a very natural Coxcomb, and feel the *Belle Passion* in good earnest. A Man of tolerable Good-Nature, who happens to be a little piqu'd; may, by improving his Resentment, become a very Fury for Revenge. Even a good Christian, who wou'd needs be over-good, and thinks he can never believe enough, may, by a small Inclination well improv'd, extend his Faith so largely, as to comprehend in it not only all Scriptural and Traditional Miracles, but a solid System of old Wives Storys. Were it needful, I cou'd put your Lordship in mind of an Eminent, Learned, and truly Chris-

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tian

tian Prelate you once knew, who cou'd have given you a full account of his Belief in *Fairys*. But we Christians, who have such ample Faith our selves, will allow nothing to poor Heathens. They must be Infidels in every sense. We will not allow 'em to believe so much as their own Religion; which we cry is too absurd to have been credited by any besides the mere Vulgar. But if a Reverend Christian Prelate may be so great a Volunteer in Faith, as beyond the ordinary Prescription of the Catholick Church, to believe in *Fairys*; why may not a Heathen Poet in the ordinary way of his Religion be allow'd to believe in *Muses*? For these, your Lordship knows, were so many Divine Persons in the Heathen Creed, and were essential in their System of Theology. The Goddeses had their Temples and
Worship

Worship the same as the other Deitys: And to disbelieve the Holy Nine, or their *Apollo*, was the same as to deny *Jove* himself, and must have been esteem'd equally Profane and Atheistical by the generality of sober Men. Now what a mighty advantage must it have been to an antient Poet to be thus Orthodox, and by the help of his Education, and a Good-Will into the bargain, to work himself up to a Belief of a Divine Presence and Heavenly Inspiration? It was never surely the Business of Poets in those days to call Revelation in question, when it made so well for their Art. On the contrary, they cou'd not fail to animate their Faith as much as possible; when by one strong Act of it, they cou'd raise themselves into such Angelical Company. How much the Imagination of such a Presence must exalt a Genius,

nus, we may observe merely from the Influence which an ordinary Presence has over Men. Our modern Wits are more or less rais'd by the Opinion they have of their Company, and the Idea they form to themselves of the Persons to whom they make their Addresses. A common Actor of the Stage will tell us how much a full Audience of the Better Sort exalts him above the common pitch. And you, my Lord, who are the noblest Actor, and of the noblest Part assign'd to any Mortal on this earthly Stage, when you are acting for Liberty and Mankind ; does not the publick Presence, that of your Friends, and the Well-wishers to your Cause, add something to your Thought and Genius ? Or is that Sublime of Reason, and that Power of Eloquence, which you discover in publick, no more than what you are
equally.

equally Master of in private, and can command at any time, alone, or with indifferent Company, or in any easy or cool hour? This indeed were more Godlike; but ordinary Humanity, I think, reaches not so high. For my own part, I am sure I have so much need of some considerable Presence or Company to raise my Thoughts on any occasion, that when alone, I must endeavour by Strength of Fancy to supply this want; and in default of a Muse, must seek out some great Man of a more than ordinary Genius, whose imagin'd Presence may inspire me with more than what I feel at ordinary hours. And thus, my Lord, have I chosen to address my self to your Lordship; tho without subscribing my Name: allowing you, as a Stranger, the full Liberty of reading no more than what you may have a fancy for:

But

But reserving to my self the privilege of imagining you read all, with particular notice, as a Friend, and one whom I may justifiably treat with the Intimacy and Freedom which follows.

IF the knowing well how to expose any Infirmary or Vice were but a sufficient Security for the Virtue which is contrary, how excellent an Age might we be presum'd to live in! Never was there in our Nation a time known, when Folly and Extravagance of every kind was more sharply inspected, or wittily ridicul'd. And one might hope at least from this good Symptom that our Age was in no declining State, since whatever our Distempers are, we stand so well affected to our Remedys. To bear the being told of Faults, is in private Persons the best token of Amendment. 'Tis
feldom

seldom that a Publick is thus dispos'd. For where Jealousy of State, or the ill Lives of the Great People, or any other Cause is powerful enough to restrain the Freedom of Censure in any part, it in effect destroys the Benefit of it in the whole. There can be no impartial and free Censure of Manners where any peculiar Custom or National Opinion is set apart, and not only exempted from Criticism, but even flatter'd with the highest Art. 'Tis only in a free Nation, such as ours, that Imposture has no Privilege; and that neither the Credit of a Court, the Power of a Nobility, nor the Awfulness of a Church can give her Protection, or hinder her from being arraign'd in every Shape and Appearance. 'Tis true, this Liberty may seem to run too far. We may be said to make ill use of it. But who shall be the Judg? What

What Remedy shall we prescribe to this in general? Can there be a better than from that Liberty it self which is complain'd of? If Men reason ill, it is Reason still must teach 'em to do better. Justness of Thought and Stile, Refinement in Manners, good Breeding, and Politeness of every kind can come only from the Trial and Experience of what is best. Let but the Search go freely on, and the right Measure of every thing will soon be found. Whatever Humour has 'got the start, if it be unnatural, it cannot hold; and the Ridicule, if ill plac'd at first, will fall at last where it deserves.

I HAVE often wonder'd to see Men of Sense so mightily alarm'd at the approach of any thing like Ridicule on certain Subjects; as if they mistrusted their own Judgments.

For

For what Ridicule can lie against Reason? Or how can any one of the least Justness of Thought endure a Ridicule wrong plac'd? Nothing is more ridiculous than this it self. The Vulgar, indeed, may swallow any sordid Jest, any mere Drollery or Buffoonery; but it must be a finer and truer Wit that takes with the Men of Sense and Breeding. How comes it to pass then, that we are such Cowards in reasoning, and are so afraid to stand the Test of Ridicule? ———— O! say we, the Subjects are too grave ———— Perhaps so: but let us see first whether they are really grave or no: for in the manner we may conceive 'em, they may peradventure be very grave and weighty in our Imaginations; but very ridiculous and impertinent in their own nature. Gravity is of the very Essence of Imposture. It does not only make

us to mistake other Things, but is apt perpetually almost to mistake it self. For in common Behaviour, how hard a thing is it for the grave Character to keep long out of the limits of the formal one? We can never be too grave, if we can but be sure we are really so: and we can never too much honour or revere any thing for grave; if we are sure the Thing is grave, as we apprehend it. The main Point is to know always true Gravity from the false: and this can only be, by carrying the Rule constantly with us, and freely applying it not only to the Things about us, but to our selves. For if we lose the measure in our selves, we shall soon lose it in every thing besides. Now what Rule or Measure is there in the World, but by considering the real Temper of Things, to find which are truly serious, and which
ridi-

ridiculous? And how can this be done, but by applying the Ridicule, to see whether it will bear or no? But if we fear to apply this Rule in any thing, what Security can we have against the Imposture of Formality in all things? We have allow'd our selves to be Formalists in one Point; and the same Formality may rule us as it pleases in all other. 'Tis not in every Disposition that we are fit to judg of things. We must judg first of our own Temper, and accordingly of other things that fall under our Judgment. But we must never more pretend to judg of things, or of our own Temper in judging them, when we have given up our preliminary Right of Judgment, and under a Presumption of Gravity, have allow'd our selves to be most ridiculous, and to admire profoundly the most ridiculous Things in

the World ; at least for ought we know. For having resolv'd never to try, we can never be sure.

*Ridiculum acri
Fortius & melius magnas plerumque
secat res.*

Hor. Sat. 10.

This, my Lord, is so true a thing in it self, and so well known for Truth by the cunning Formalists of the Age, that they can better bear to have their Impostures rail'd at, with all the Bitterness and Vehemence imaginable, than to have them touch'd ever so gently in this other way. They know very well that as Modes and Fashions, so Opinions, tho ever so ridiculous, are kept up by Solemnity : and that those formal Notions which grew up in an ill Mood, and have been conceiv'd in sober Sadness, are
never

never to be remov'd but in a sober kind of Chearfulness, and by a more easy and pleasant way of Thought. There is a Melancholy which accompanys all Enthusiasm. Be it Love or Religion (for there are Enthusiasms in both) nothing can put a stop to the growing mischief of either, till the Melancholy be remov'd, and the Mind at liberty to hear what can be said against the Ridiculousness of an Extreme in either way.

IT was heretofore the Wisdom of some wise Nations, to let People be Fools as much as they pleas'd, and never to punish seriously what deserv'd only to be laugh'd at, and was best cur'd by that innocent Remedy. There are certain Humours in Mankind, which of necessity must have vent. The Human Mind and Body are both of 'em
natu-

naturally subject to Commotions; and as there are strange Ferments in the Blood, which in many Bodys occasion an extraordinary discharge; so in Reason too, there are heterogeneous Particles which must be thrown off by Fermentation. Shou'd Physicians endeavour absolutely to allay those Ferments of the Body, and strike in the Humours which discover themselves in such Eruptions, they might bid fair to raise a Plague, and turn a Spring-Ague or an Autumn-Surfeit into an epidemical malignant Fever. They are certainly as ill Physicians in the Body Politick, who wou'd needs be tampering with these mental Eruptions; and under the specious pretence of healing this Itch of Superstition, and saving Souls from the Contagion of Enthusiasm, shou'd set all Nature in an uproar, and turn a few innocent Carbuncles into
an

an Inflammation and mortal Gangrene.

WE read in History that *Pan*, when he accompany'd *Bacchus* in an Expedition to the *Indies*, found means to strike a Terror thro' a Host of Enemies, by the help of a small Company whose Clamors he manag'd to good advantage among the ecchoing Rocks and Caverns of a woody Vale. The hoarse bellowing of the Caves, join'd to the hideous aspect of such dark and desert Places, rais'd such a Horror in the Enemy, that in this state their Imagination help'd em to hear Voices, and no doubt to see Forms too, that were more than Human: whilst the Uncertainty of what they fear'd made their Fear yet greater, and spread it faster by implicit Looks than any Narration could convey it. And this was what in after-times Men call'd a *Pannick*.
The

The Story indeed gives a good Hint of the nature of this Passion, which can hardly be without some mixture of Enthusiasm, and Horrors of a superstitious kind.

WE may with good reason call every Passion *Pannick* which is rais'd in a Multitude, and convey'd by Aspect, or as it were by Contact, or Sympathy. Thus popular Fury may be call'd *Pannick*, when the Rage of the People, as we have sometimes known, has put them beyond themselves; especially where Religion has had to do. And in this state their very Looks are infectious. The Fury flies from Face to Face: and the Disease is no sooner seen than caught. Those who in a better Situation of Mind have seen a Multitude under the power of this Passion, have own'd that they saw in the Countenances of
of

of Men something more ghastly and terrible, than at other times is express'd on the most passionate occasions. Such force has Society in ill, as well as in good Passions: and so much stronger any Affection is for being social and communicative.

THUS, my Lord, there are many *Pannicks* in Mankind, besides merely that of Fear. And thus is Religion also *Pannick*; when Enthusiasm of any kind gets up; as oft, on melancholy occasions, it will do. For Vapors naturally rise; and in bad times especially, when the Spirits of Men are low, as either in publick Calamitys, or during the Unwholesomeness of Air or Diet, or when Convulsions happen in Nature, Storms, Earthquakes, or other amazing Prodigys: at this season the *Pannick* must needs run
D high,

high, and the Magistrate of necessity give way to it. For to apply a serious Remedy, and to bring the Sword, or *Fasces*, as a Cure, must make the Case more melancholy, and increase the very Cause of the Distemper. To forbid Mens natural Fears, and to endeavour the overpowering them by other Fears, must needs be a most unnatural Method. The Magistrate, if he be any Artist, shou'd have a gentler hand; and instead of Causticks, Incisions, and Amputations, shou'd be using the softest Balms; and with a kind Sympathy entering into the Concern of the People, and taking, as it were, their Passion upon him, shou'd, when he has sooth'd and satisfy'd it, endeavour, by chearful ways, to divert and heal it.

THIS was antient Policy: and hence (as a notable Author of our Nation

Nation expresses it) it is necessary a People shou'd have a *Publick Leading* in Religion. For to deny the Magistrate a Worship, or take away a National Church, is as mere Enthusiasm as the Notion which sets up Persecution. For why shou'd there not be publick Walks, as well as private Gardens? Why not publick Librarys, as well as private Education and Home-Tutors? But to prescribe bounds to Fancy and Speculation, to regulate Mens Apprehensions and religious Beliefs or Fears, to suppress by Violence the natural Passion of Enthusiasm, or to endeavour to ascertain it, or reduce it to one Species, or bring it under any one Modification, is in truth no better Sense, nor deserves a better Character, than what the Comedian declares of the like Project in the Affair of Love———

—————*Nihilo plus agas*
Quam si des operam ut cum ratione
insanias.

NOT only the Visionarys and Enthusiasts of all kinds were tolerated, your Lordship knows, by the Antients: but on the other side, Philosophy had as free a course, and was permitted as a Ballance against Superstition. And whilst some Sects, such as the *Pythagorean* and latter *Platonick*, join'd in with the Superstition and Enthusiasm of the Times; the *Epicurean*, the *Academick*, and others, were allow'd to use all the Force of Wit and Railery against it. And thus matters were ballanc'd; Reason had fair Play; Learning and Science flourish'd. Wonderful was the Harmony and Temper that arose from all these Contrarietys. Thus Superstition and Enthusiasm were mildly
treated;

treated; and being let alone, they never rag'd to that degree as to occasion Bloodshed, Wars, Persecutions and Devastations in the World. But a new sort of Policy, which extends it self to another World, and considers the future Lives and Happiness of Men rather than the present, has made us leap the Bounds of natural Humanity; and out of a supernatural Charity, has taught us the way of plaguing one another most devoutly. It has rais'd an Antipathy which no temporal Interest cou'd ever do; and entail'd upon us a mutual Hatred to all Eternity. And now *Uniformity in Opinion* (a hopeful Project!) is look'd on as the only Expedient against this Evil. The saving of Souls is now the Heroick Passion of exalted Spirits; and is become in a manner the chief care of the Magistrate, and the very end of Government it self.

IF

IF Magistracy shou'd vouchsafe to interpose thus much in other Sciences, I am afraid we shou'd have as bad Logick, as bad Mathematicks, and in every kind as bad Philosophy, as we often have Divinity, in Countrys where a precise Orthodoxy is settled by Law: 'Tis a hard matter for a Government to settle Wit. If it does but keep us sober and honest, 'tis likely we shall have as much Ability in our spiritual as in our temporal Affairs: and if we can but be trusted, we shall have Wit enough to save our selves, when no prejudice lies in the way. But if Honesty and Wit be insufficient for this saving Work, 'tis in vain for the Magistrate to meddle with it: since if he be ever so vertuous or wise, he may be as soon mistaken as another Man. I am sure the only way to
save

save Mens Sense, or preserve Wit at all in the World, is to give Liberty to Wit. Now Wit can never have its Liberty, where the freedom of Raillery is taken away : For against serious Extravagances and spleenitick Humours there is no Remedy but this.

WE have indeed full Power over all other Modifications of Spleen. We may treat other Enthusiasms as we please. We may ridicule Love, or Gallantry, or Knight-Errantry to the utmost ; and we find, that in these latter Days of Wit, the Humour of this kind, which was once so prevalent, is pretty well declin'd. The Crusades, the rescuing of Holy Lands, and such devout Gallantrys are in less request than formerly : But if something of this militant Religion, something of this Soul-rescuing Spirit, and Saint-Errantry prevails

prevails still, we need not wonder, when we consider in how solemn a manner we treat this Distemper, and how preposterously we go about to cure Enthusiasm.

I CAN hardly forbear fancying, that if we had but an Inquisition, or some formal Court of Judicature, with grave Officers, and Judges, erected to restrain Poetical Licence, and in general to suppress that Fancy and Humour of Versification; but in particular that most extravagant Passion of Love, as it is set out by Poets, in its Heathenish Dress of *Venus's* and *Cupid's*; if the Poets, as Ringleaders and Teachers of this Heresy, were under grievous Penalties forbid to enchant the People by their vein of Rhyming; and if the People, on the other side, were under proportionable Penalties forbid to hearken to any such Charm, or lend their
Atten-

Attention to any Love-Tale, so much as in a Play, a Novel, or a Ballad; we might perhaps see a new *Arcadia* arising out of this heavy Persecution: Old People and Young wou'd be seiz'd with a versifying Spirit; we shou'd have Field-Conventicles of Lovers and Poets; Forests wou'd be fill'd with romantick Shepherds and Shepherdesses; and Rocks resound with Ecchoes of Hymns and Praises offer'd to the Powers of Love. We might have a fair Chance by this means to bring back the whole Train of Heathen Gods, and set our cold Northern Island burning with as many Altars to *Venus* and *Apollo*, as formerly either *Cyprus*, *Delos*, or any of those warmer *Grecian* Climates.

BUT, my Lord, you may perhaps wonder, that having been drawn into such a serious Subject as

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Religion, I shou'd forget my self so far as to give way to Raillery and Humour. I must own to you, my Lord, it is not thro Chance merely, that it has thus happen'd. To say Truth, I care not so much as to think on this Subject, much less to write on it, without endeavouring to put my self in as good Humour as is possible. People indeed, who can endure no middle Temper, but are all Air and Humour, know little of the Doubts and Scruples of Religion, and are safe from any immediate Influence of devout Melancholy or Enthusiasm; which requires more Deliberation and thoughtful Practice to fix it self in a Temper, and grow habitual. But be the Habit what it will; to be deliver'd of it at so sad a Cost as Inconsiderateness, or Madness, is what I wou'd never wish to be my Lot. I had rather stand all Adventures
with



with Religion, than endeavour to get rid of the Thoughts of it by Diversion. All I contend for, is to think of it in a right Humour : and that this goes more than half way towards thinking rightly of it, is what I shall endeavour to demonstrate.

GOOD Humour is not only the best Security against Enthusiasm, but the best Foundation of Piety and true Religion : For if right Thoughts and worthy Apprehensions of the Supreme Being, are fundamental to all true Worship and Adoration; 'tis more than probable, that we shall never miscarry in this respect, but thro ill Humour only. Nothing but ill Humour, either natural or forc'd, can bring a Man to think that the World is govern'd by any devilish or malicious Power. I very much question whether any thing, besides

ill Humour, can be the Cause of Atheism: for there are so many Arguments to persuade a Man in Humour, that, in the main, all things are kindly and well dispos'd, that one wou'd think it impossible for him to be so far out of conceit with Affairs, as to imagine that they all ran at Adventures, and that the World, as wise a Face as it carry'd, had neither Sense nor Meaning in it. This however I am persuaded of, that nothing but ill Humour can give us dreadful or ill Thoughts of a Supreme Manager. Nothing can persuade us of Sullenness or Sourness in such a Being, but the forefeeling of somewhat of this kind in our selves: and if we are afraid of bringing good Humour into Religion, or thinking with Freedom and Pleasantness on such a Subject as God; 'tis because we conceive the Subject so like our selves, and
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can hardly have a Notion of Majesty and Greatness without Stateliness and Moroseness accompanying it. This, however, is the just Reverse of that Character, which we own to be most divinely Good, when we see it, as we sometimes do, in Men of highest Power among us: If they pass for truly Good, we dare treat them freely, and are sure they will not be displeas'd with this Liberty. They are doubly Gainers by this Goodness of theirs: For the more they are search'd into and familiarly examin'd, the more their Worth appears; and the Discoverer, charm'd with his Success, esteems and loves more than ever, when he has prov'd this additional Bounty in his Superior, and reflects on that Candor and Generosity he has experienc'd. Your Lordship knows more perhaps of this Mystery than any one. How else shou'd you
have

have been so belov'd in Power, and out of Power so adher'd to, and still more belov'd ?

THANK Heaven ! there are even in our own Age some such Examples. In former Ages there have been many such. We have known mighty Princes, and even Emperors of the World, who cou'd bear unconcernedly not only the free Censure of their Actions, but the most spiteful Reproaches and Calumnys, even to their Faces. Some perhaps may wish there had never been such Examples found in Heathens : but more especially, that the occasion had never been given by Christians. 'Twas more the Misfortune indeed of Mankind in general, than of Christians in particular, that some of the earlier Roman Emperors were such Monsters of Tyranny, and began a Persecution, not on religious Men merely,

merely, but on all that were suspected of Worth or Vertue. What cou'd have been a higher Honour or Advantage to Christianity, than to be persecuted by a *Nero*? But better Princes, who came afterwards, were perswaded to remit these severe Courses. 'Tis true, the Magistrate might possibly have been surpriz'd with the newness of a Notion, which he might pretend perhaps did not only destroy the Sacredness of his Power, but treated him and all Men as profane, impious and damn'd, who enter'd not into certain particular Modes of Worship, of which there had been formerly so many thousand kinds instituted, all of 'em compatible and sociable till that time. However, such was the Wisdom of some succeeding Ministries, that the edge of Persecution was much abated; and even that Prince, who was esteem'd the greatest Enemy of the Christian

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Christian Sect, and who himself had been educated in it, was a great Restrainer of Persecution, and wou'd allow of nothing further than a Resumption of Church-Lands and publick Schools, without any attempt on the Goods or Persons even of those who branded the State-Religion, and made a Merit of affronting the publick Worship.

'TIS well we have the Authority of a sacred Author in our Religion, to assure us that the Spirit of Love and Humanity is above that of Martyrs. Otherwise one might be a little scandaliz'd perhaps at the History of many of our primitive Confessors and Martyrs, even according to our own accounts. There is hardly now in the World so good a Christian (if this be indeed the Mark of a good one) who if he liv'd at *Constantinople*, or elsewhere
under

under the Protection of the Turks, wou'd think it fitting or decent to give any Disturbance to their *Mosque-Worship*. And as good Protestants, my Lord, as you and I are, we shou'd think him little better than a rank Enthusiast, who out of hatred to the Romish Idolatry, shou'd in time of high Mass (where Mass was by Law establish'd) interrupt the Priest with Clamors, or fall foul on his Images and Relicks.

THERE are some, it seems, of our good Brethren, the *French* Protestants, lately come amongst us, who are mightily taken with this Primitive way. They have set a-foot the Spirit of Martyrdom to a wonder in their own Country; and they long to be trying it here, if we will give 'em leave: that is to say, if we will do 'em the favor to hang or imprison 'em; if we

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will

will be so kind as to break their Bones for 'em, after their Country fashion, blow up their Zeal, and stir a-fresh the Coals of Persecution. But no such Grace can they yet obtain of us. So hard-hearted we are, that tho their own Mob are willing to bestow kind Blows upon 'em, and stone 'em now and then in the Streer; tho the Priests of their own Nation wou'd gladly give 'em their desir'd Discipline, and are earnest to light their probationary Fires for 'em: We *English* Men, who are Masters in our own Country, will not suffer the Enthusiasts to be thus us'd. Nor can we be suppos'd to act thus in envy to their Phenix-Sect, which it seems has risen out of the Flames, and wou'd grow to be a new Church by the same manner of Propagation as the old one, whose Seed was truly said to be *from the Blood of the Martyrs*. But
how

how barbarous and more than heathenishly cruel are we tolerating *English* Men! For not contented to deny these Prophefying Enthusiasts the Honor of a Persecution, we have deliver'd 'em over to the cruellest Contempt in the World. I am told they are at this time the Subject of a choice Droll or Puppet-Shew at *Bart'lemy-Fair*. There doubtless their strange Voices and involuntary Agitations are admirably well acted, by the Motion of Wires, and Inspiration of Pipes. For the Bodys of the Prophets, in their state of Prophecy, being not in their own power, but (as they say themselves) mere passive Organs, actuated by an exterior Force, have nothing natural or resembling real Life in any of their Sounds or Motions: so that how aukardly soever a Puppet-Shew may imitate other Actions, it must needs represent this Passion

to the life. And whilst *Bart'lemy-Fair* is in possession of this Privilege, I dare stand Security to our National Church, that no Sect of Enthusiasts, no new Venders of Prophecy or Miracles, shall ever get the start, or put her to the trouble of trying her Strength with 'em, in any Case.

HAPPY it was for Us, that when Popery had got possession, *Smithfield* was us'd in a more tragical way. Many of our first Reformers, 'tis fear'd, were little better than Enthusiasts : and God knows whether a Warmth of this kind did not considerably help us in the throwing off that spiritual Tyranny. So that had not the Priests, as is usual, prefer'd the Love of Blood to all other Passions, they might in a merrier way perhaps have evaded the greatest Force of our Reforming Spirit. I
never

never heard that the antient Heathens were so well advis'd in their ill Purpose of suppressing the Christian Religion in its first Rise, as to make use of this *Bart'lemy-Fair* Method. But this I am persuaded of, that had the Truth of the Gospel been any way surmountable, they wou'd have bid much fairer for the silencing it, if they had chose to bring our primitive Founders upon the Stage in a pleasanter way than that of Bear-Skins and Pitch-Barrels.

THE *Jews* were naturally a very cloudy People, and wou'd endure little Raillery in any thing; much less in what belong'd to any Religious Doctrines or Opinions. Religion was look'd upon with a sul-
len Eye; and Hanging was the only Remedy they cou'd prescribe for any thing that look'd like setting
up

up a new Revelation. The foreign Argument was, *Crucify, Crucify*. But with all their Malice and Inveteracy to our Saviour, and his Apostles after him, had they but taken the Fancy to act such Puppet-Shews in his Contempt, as at this hour the Papists are acting in his Honor ; I am apt to think they wou'd have done our Religion more harm, than by all their other ways of Severity.

I BELIEVE our great and learned Apostle found less Advantage from the easy Treatment of his *Athenian* Antagonists, than from the surly and curst Spirit of the most persecuting *Jewish* Citys. He made less Improvement of the Candour and Civility of his *Roman* Judges, than of the Zeal of the Synagogue, and Vehemence of his National Priests. Tho when I consider this Apostle as appearing either before
the

the witty *Athenians*, or before a *Roman* Court of Judicature, in the Presence of their great Men and Ladys; and see how handsomly he accommodates himself to the Apprehensions and Temper of those politer People, I do not find that he declines the way of Wit or good Humor; but, without Suspicion of his Cause, is willing generously to commit it to this Proof, and try it against the Sharpness of any Ridicule that might be offer'd.

BUT tho the *Jews* were never pleas'd to try their Wit or Malice this way against our Saviour or his Apostles; the irreligious part of the Heathens had try'd it long before against the best Doctrines and best Characters of Men that had ever arisen amongst 'em. Nor did this prove in the end any Injury, but on the contrary the highest Advantage
to

to those very Characters and Doctrines, which having stood the proof, were found so solid and just. The divinest Man that had appear'd ever in the Heathen World, was in the height of witty Times; and by the wittiest of all Poets, most abominably ridicul'd, in a whole Comedy writ and acted on purpose. But so far was this from sinking his Reputation, or suppressing his Philosophy, that they both increas'd the more for it; and he grew to be more the Envy of other Teachers. He was not only contented to be ridicul'd; but that he might help the Poet as much as possible, he presented himself openly in the Theater; that his real Figure (which was no advantageous one) might be compar'd with that which the witty Poet had brought as his Representative on the Stage. Such was his good Humor. Nor cou'd there be in the World a greater Testimony

timony of the invincible Goodness of the Man, or a greater Demonstration that there was no Imposture either in his Character or Opinions. For Imposture is not apt to fear a grave Enemy. A solemn Attack, she knows, is not of such danger to her. There is nothing she abhors or dreads like good Humor.

IN short, my Lord, the melancholy way of treating Religion is that which, according to my Apprehension, renders it so tragical, and is the occasion of its acting in reality such dismal Tragedys in the World. And my Notion is, that provided we treat Religion with good Manners, we can never use too much good Humor, or examine it with too much Freedom and Familiarity. For if it be genuine and sincere, it will not only stand the Proof, but thrive and gain Advantage from
G hence:

hence : if it be spurious, or mixt with any Imposture, it will be detected and expos'd.

THE melancholy way in which we have been taught Religion, makes us unapt to think of it in good Humor. 'Tis in Adversity chiefly, or in ill Health, under Affliction, or Disturbance of Mind, or Discomposure of Temper, that we have chiefly recourse to it. Tho in reality we are never so unfit to think of it as at such a dark hour. We can never be fit to contemplate any thing above us, when we are in no Condition to look into our selves, and calmly examine the Temper of our own Mind and Passions. For then it is we see Wrath, and Fury, and Revenge, and Terrors in the Deity ; when we are full of Disturbances and Fears within, and have, by Sufferance and Anxiety,
lost

lost so much of the natural Calm and Easiness of our Tempers.

WE must not only be in ordinary good Humor, but in the best of Humors, and in the sweetest, kindest Disposition of our Lives, to understand well what true Goodness is, and what those Attributes imply, which we ascribe with such Applause and Honor to the Deity. We shall then be able to see best, whether those Forms of Justice, those Degrees of Punishment, that Temper of Resentment, and those Measures of Offence and Indignation, which we vulgarly suppose in God, are suitable to those original Ideas of Goodness, which the same Divine Being, or Nature under him, has implanted in us, and which we must necessarily presuppose, in order to give him Praise or Honor in any kind. This, my Lord, is the Se-

curity against all Superstition : To remember that there is nothing in God but what is Godlike ; and that he is either *not at all*, or *truly and perfectly Good*. But when we are afraid to use our Reason freely, even on that very Question, whether he really be, or not ; we then actually presume him bad, and flatly contradict that pretended Character of Goodness and Greatness, whilst we discover this mistrust of his Temper, and fear his Anger and Resentment, in the case of this freedom of Enquiry.

WE have a notable Instance of this Freedom in one of our Sacred Authors. As patient as *Job* is said to be, it cannot be deny'd but he makes bold enough with God, and takes his Providence roundly to task. His Friends, 'tis true, plead hard with him, and use all Arguments, right or wrong, to patch up Objections,

jections, and set the Affairs of Providence upon an equal foot. They make a Merit of saying all the Good they can of God, at the very stretch of their Reason, and sometimes quite beyond it. But this, in Job's opinion, is flattering God, *accepting of God's Person*, and even *mocking him*. And no wonder. For what Merit can there be in believing God or his Providence upon frivolous and weak grounds? What Vertue in assuming an Opinion contrary to the appearance of Things, and resolving to hear nothing that may be said against it? Excellent Character of the God of Truth! that he shou'd be offended at us, for having refus'd to put the lye upon our Understandings, as much as in us lay; and be pleas'd with us for having believ'd, at a venture, and again *our Reason*; what might have been the greatest Fals-
hood

hood in the world, for any thing we cou'd bring as a Proof or Evidence to the contrary!

IT is impossible that any but an ill-natur'd Man can wish against the Being of a God: for this is wishing against the Publick, and even against one's private Good too, if rightly understood. But if a Man has no such Ill-will to stifle his Belief, he must have surely an unhappy Opinion of God, and think him not so good by far as he knows himself to be, if he imagines that an impartial Use of his Reason, in any matter of Speculation whatsoever, can make him run any risk hereafter; and that a mean Denial of his Reason, and an Affectation of Belief in any point too hard for his Understanding, can intitle him to any Favor in another World. This is being Sycophants
in

in Religion, mere Parasites of Devotion. 'Tis using God as the crafty Beggars use those they address to, when they are ignorant of their Quality. The Novices amongst 'em may innocently come out perhaps with a *Good Sir!* or a *Good Forsooth!* But with the old Stagers, no matter who they meet in a Coach, 'tis always *Good your Honor!* or *Good your Lordship!* or *Your Ladyship!* For if there shou'd be really a *Lord*, in the case; we shou'd be undone (say they) for want of giving the Title: But if the Party shou'd be no *Lord*, there wou'd be no harm; it wou'd not be ill taken.

AND thus it is in Religion. We are highly concern'd how to *beg right*; and think all depends upon hitting the *Title*, and making a good guess. 'Tis the most beggarly Refuge

fuge imaginable which is cry'd up so much, and stands as a great Maxim with many able Men; " That
" they shou'd strive to have Faith,
" and believe to the utmost: be-
" cause if after all there be nothing
" in the matter, there will be no
" harm in being thus deceiv'd; but
" if there be any thing, it will be
" fatal for them not to have be-
" liev'd to the full. But they are
so far mistaken, that whilst they
have this Thought, 'tis certain they
can never believe either to their Sa-
tisfaction and Happiness in this
World, or with any advantage of
Recommendation to another. For
besides that our Reason, which
knows the Cheat, will never rest
thorowly satisfy'd on such a bot-
tom, but turn us often a-drift, and
toss us in a Sea of Doubt and Per-
plexity; we cannot but actually
grow worse in our Religion, and
enter-

entertain a worse Opinion still of a Supreme Deity, whilst our Belief is founded on so injurious a Thought of him.

TO love the Publick, to study universal Good, and to promote the Interest of the whole World, as far as is in our power, is surely the Height of Goodness, and makes that Temper which we call *Divine*. In this Temper, my Lord (for surely you shou'd know it well) 'tis natural for us to wish that others shou'd partake with us, by being convinc'd of the Sincerity of our Example. 'Tis natural for us to wish our Merit shou'd be known; particularly if it be our fortune to have serv'd a Nation as a good Minister, or as some Prince, or Father of a Country, to have render'd happy a considerable Part of Mankind under our Care. But if

it happen'd, that of this number there shou'd be some so ignorantly bred, and of so remote a Province, as to have been out of the hearing of our Name and Actions ; or hearing of 'em, shou'd be so puzzled with odd and contrary Storys told up and down concerning us, that they knew not what to think, whether there were really in the world any such Person as our self : Shou'd we not, in good truth, be ridiculous to take offence at this ? And shou'd we not pass for extravagantly morose and ill-humor'd, if instead of treating the matter in Raillery, we shou'd think in earnest of revenging our selves on the offending Partys, who out of their rustick Ignorance, ill Judgment, or Incredulity, had detracted from our Renown ?

*

HOW

HOW shall we say then? Does it really deserve Praise, to be thus concern'd about it? Is the doing Good for Glory's sake, so divine a thing? Or is it not diviner, to do Good even where it may be thought inglorious, even to the Ingrateful, and to those who are wholly insensible of the Good they receive? How comes it then that what is so divine in us, shou'd lose its Character in the Divine Being? And that according as the Deity is represented to us, he shou'd more resemble the weak, womanish, and impotent part of our Nature, than the generous, manly, and divine?

ONE wou'd think, my Lord, it were no hard thing to know our own Weaknesses at first sight, and distinguish the Features of human Frailty, with which we are so

well acquainted. One wou'd think it were easy to understand that Provocation and Offence, Anger, Revenge, Jealousy in point of Honor or Power, Love of Fame, Glory, and the like, belong only to limited Beings, and are necessarily excluded in a Being which is Perfect and Universal. But if we have never settled with our selves any Notion of what is *morally excellent*; or if we cannot trust to that Reason which tells us, that nothing but *what is so*, can have place in the Deity; we can neither trust to any thing that others relate of him, or that himself reveals to us. We must be sure first, that he is good, and cannot deceive us. Without this there can be no real Religious Faith or Confidence. Now if there be really something previous to Revelation, some antecedent Demonstration of Reason, to assure us
that

that God *is*, and that he is so good as not to deceive us ; the same Reason, if we will trust to it, will prove to us that God is so good, as to exceed the very best of us in Goodness. And after this manner we can have no Dread or Suspicion to render us uneasy : for it is *Malice* only, and not *Goodness*, that can make us afraid.

THERE is an odd way of Reasoning, but in certain Distempers of Mind very sovereign to those who can apply it ; and it is this.

“ There can be no Malice but
“ where Interests are oppos’d. A
“ universal Being can have no In-
“ terest opposite ; and therefore
“ can have no Malice. If there be
a general Mind, it can have no
particular Interest : But the general
Good, or Good of the Whole, and
its own private Good, must needs
be

be one and the same. It can intend nothing besides, nor aim at any thing beyond, nor be provok'd to any thing contrary. So that we have only to consider, whether there be such a thing as a *Mind that has relation to the Whole*, or not. For if there be no Mind, we may comfort our selves however, that Nature has no Malice : If there be really a Mind, we may rest satisfy'd that it is the best-natur'd one in the world. The last Case one wou'd think shou'd be the most comfortable; and the Notion of a common Parent, less frightful than that of forlorn Nature, and a fatherless World. Tho, as Religion stands amongst us, there are many good People who wou'd have less fear in being thus expos'd, and wou'd be easier perhaps in their Mind, if they were assur'd they had only mere Chance to trust to. For
no

no body trembles to think that there shou'd be *no God*; but that there *shou'd be one*. But this wou'd be otherwise, if *Deity* were thought as kindly of as *Humanity*; and we cou'd be perswaded to believe, that if there really was a God, the highest Goodness must of necessity belong to him, without any of those Defects of Passion, those Meannesses and Imperfections which we acknowledg such in our selves, which as good Men we endeavour all we can to be superior to, and which we find we every day conquer as we grow better.

METHINKS, my Lord, it wou'd be well for us, if before we ascended into the higher Regions of Divinity, we wou'd vouchsafe to descend a little into our selves, and bestow some poor Thoughts upon plain honest Morals. When
we

we had once look'd into our selves, and distinguish'd well the nature of our own' Affections, we shou'd probably be fitter Judges of the Divineness of a Character, and discern better, what Affections were futable or unfutable to a perfect Being. We might then understand how to *love*, and *praise*, when we had gain'd some consistent Notion of what was *laudable* or *lovely*. Otherwise we might chance to do God little honor, when we intended him the most. For 'tis hard to imagine what honor can arise to the Deity from the Praises of Creatures, who are unable to discern what is praiseworthy or excellent in their own kind.

IF a Musician were cry'd up to the skys by a Set of People who had no Ear in Musick, he wou'd surely be put to the blush, and cou'd hardly,

hardly, with a good Countenance, accept the Benevolence of his Auditors, till they had acquir'd a more competent apprehension of him, and cou'd by their own senses find out something that was really good in his Performance. Till this were brought about, there wou'd be little Glory in the Case; and the Musician, tho ever so vain, wou'd have little reason to be contented.

THOSE who affect Praise the most, had rather not be taken notice of, than be impertinently applauded. I know not how it comes about, that he who is said to do good the most disinterestedly, shou'd be thought desirous of being prais'd so lavishly, and be suppos'd to set so high a rate upon so cheap and low a thing as ignorant Commendation and forc'd Applause.

IT

IT is not the same with Goodness as with other Qualitys, which we may understand very well, and yet not possess. We may have an excellent Ear in Musick, without being able to perform in any kind. We may judg well of Poetry, without being Poets, or possessing the least of a Poetick Vein. But we can have no tolerable Notion of Goodness, without being tolerably good. So that if the Praise of a Divine Being be so great a part of his Worship, we shou'd, methinks, learn Goodness, were it for nothing else but that we might learn to *praise*: for the Praise of Goodness from an unsound hollow Heart, must certainly make the greatest dissonance in the world.

OTHER Reasons, my Lord,
there are why this plain home-spun
Philo-

Philosophy, of looking into our selves, may do us wond'rous service, in rectifying our Errors in Religion. For there is a sort of Enthusiasm of second hand. And when Men find no Commotions in themselves, no *Pannick* that bewitches 'em, they are apt still, by the Testimony of others, to be impos'd on, and led credulously into the Belief of many false Miracles. And this Habit may make them of a very inconstant Faith, easy to be carry'd away with every Wind of Doctrine, and addicted to every upstart Sect or Superstition. But the knowledg of our Passions in their very Seeds, the measuring well the Growth and Progress of Enthusiasm, and the judging rightly of its natural Force, and what command it has over our very Senses, may teach us to oppose more successfully those Delusions which come arm'd with

the specious pretext of moral Certainty, and *Matter of Fact*.

THE new Prophefying Sect, which I made mention of above, pretend, it seems, among many other Miracles, to have had a most signal one, acted premeditately, and with warning, before many hundreds of People, who actually give Testimony to the Truth of it. But I wou'd only ask, whether there were present, amongst those hundreds, any one Person, who having never been of their Sect, or addicted to their way, will give the same Testimony with them? I must not be contented to ask, whether such a one had been wholly free of that particular Enthusiasm; but whether before that time he was esteem'd of so sound a Judgment, and clear a Head, as to be wholly free of Melancholy, and in all likelihood

lihood incapable of all Enthusiasm besides. For otherwise the Pannick may have been caught; the Evidence of the Senses lost, as in a Dream; and the Imagination so inflam'd, as in a moment to have burnt up every Particle of Judgment and Reason. The combustible Matters lie prepar'd within, and ready to take fire at a spark; but chiefly in a Multitude seiz'd with that Spirit. No wonder if the Blaze arises so of a sudden; when innumerable Eyes glow with the Passion, and heaving Breasts are laboring with Inspiration: When not the Aspect only, but the very Breath and Exhalations of Men are infectious, and the inspiring Disease imparts it self by insensible Transpiration. I am not a Divine good enough to resolve what Spirit that was which provid'd so catching amongst the ancient Prophets, that even

even the Profane *Saul* was taken by it. But I learn from Holy Scripture, that there was the evil, as well as the good Spirit of Prophecy. And I find by present Experience, as well as by all Historys Sacred and Profane, that the Operation of this Spirit is every where the same, as to the bodily Organs.

A GENTLEMAN who has writ lately in defence of reviv'd Prophecy, and has since fallen himself into the prophetick Extasys, tells us, that the antient Prophets had the Spirit of God upon them under Extasy, with divers strange Gestures of Body denominating them Madmen (or Enthusiasts) as appears evidently, says he, in the Instances of *Balaam*, *Saul*, *David*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, &c. And he proceeds to justify this by the Practice of the Apostolick Times, and by the

the Regulation which the Apostle himself applies to these seemingly irregular Gifts, so frequent and ordinary (as our Author pretends) in the primitive Church, on the first rise and spreading of Christianity. But I leave it to him to make the Resemblance as well as he can between his own and the Apostolick way. I only know that the Symptoms he describes, and which himself (poor Gentleman!) labors under, are as Heathenish as he can possibly pretend them to be Christian. And when I saw him lately under an *Agitation* (as they call it) uttering Prophecy in a pompous Latin Stile, of which out of his Extasy it seems he is wholly incapable; it brought into my mind the Latin Poet's Description of the Sybil, whose Agonys were so perfectly like these.

—Subito

— Subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ mansere comæ; sed pec-
tus anhelum,

Et rabie fera corda tument; majorque
videri

Nec mortale sonans: afflata est Nu-
mine quando

Jam propiore Dei.—

Virg. Æn. Lib. 6.

And again presently after:

— Immanis in antro.

Bacchatur Vates, magnam si pectore
possit

Excussisse Deum: tanto magis Ille fa-
tigat

Os rubidum, fera corda domans, fin-
gitque premendo.

Which is the very Style of our ex-
perienc'd Author. “ For the In-

“ spir’d (says he) undergo a Pro-
“ bation, wherein the Spirit by fre-

“ quent

“quent Agitations forms the Organs,
 “ordinarily for a Month or two
 “before Utterance.

THE Roman Historian speaking of a most horrible Enthusiasm that broke out in Rome long before his days, describes this Spirit of Prophecy; *Viros, velut mente captâ, cum jactatione fanatica corporis vaticinari.* Liv. 39. The detestable Things that follow, I would not willingly transcribe: but the Senate's mild Decree in so execrable a Case, I can't omit copying; being satisfy'd that tho' your Lordship has read it before now, you can read it again and again with admiration: *In reliquum deinde (says Livy) S. C. cautum est, &c. Si quis tale sacrum solenne & necessarium duceret, nec sine Religione & Piaculo se id omittere posse; apud Præto-rem Urbanum profiteretur: Prætor Senat-um consulcret. Si ei permissum esset,*

cum in Senatu centum non minus essent, ita id sacrum faceret; dum ne plus quinque sacrificio interessent, ne qua pecunia communis, ne quis Magister sacrorum, aut Sacerdos esset.

and SO necessary it is to give way to this Distemper of Enthusiasm, that even that Philosopher who bent the whole Force of his Philosophy against Superstition, appears to have left room for visionary Fancy, and to have indirectly tolerated Enthusiasm. For it is hard to imagine that one who had so little Religious Faith as *Epicurus*, shou'd have so vulgar a Credulity as to believe those accounts of Armys and Castles in the Air, and such visionary Phenomena. Yet he allows them; and then thinks to solve them, by his *Effluvia*, and Aerial Looking-Glasses, and I know not what other Stuff: which his *Latin Poet* however
 21 sets

sets off beautifully, as he does all.

— Rerum Simulacra vagari

Multa, modis multis, in cunctas undique
parteis

Tenuia, quæ facile inter se junguntur
in auris,

Obvia cum veniunt, ut aranea brac-
teaue auri

* * * * *

* * * * *

Centauros itaque, & Scyllarum Mem-
bra videmus,

Cerbereasque canum facies, simulacra-
que eorum

Quorum morte obita tellus amplectitur
ossa :

Omne genus quoniam passim simulacra
feruntur,

Partim sponte sua quæ fiunt aere in
ipso ;

Partim quæ Variis ab rebus cumque
recedunt.

Lucret. L. 4.

TWAS

'T WAS a sign that this Philosopher believ'd there was a good stock of Visionary Spirit originally in Human Nature. He was so satisfy'd that Men were inclin'd to see Visions, that rather than they shou'd go without, he chose to make 'em to their hand. Tho he wou'd not allow the Principles of Religion to be natural, he was forc'd tacitly to allow there was a wondrous Disposition in Mankind towards supernatural Objects; and that if these Ideas were vain, they were yet in a manner innate, or such as Men were really born to, and cou'd hardly by any means avoid. From which Concession a Divine, methinks, might raise a good Argument against him, for the Truth as well as the Usefulness of Religion. But so it is: whether the matter of Apparition be true or false, the Symptoms are the same,

same, and the Passion of equal force in the Person who is Vision-struck. The *Lymphatici* of the *Latins* were the *Nympholepti* of the *Greeks*. They were Persons said to have seen some Species of Divinity, as either some Rural Deity, or *Nymph*, which threw them into such Transports as overcame their Reason. The Extasys express'd themselves outwardly in Quakings, Tremblings, Tossings of the Head and Limbs, *Agitations*; and (as *Livy* calls them) *Fanatical Throws* or Convulsions, extemporary Prayer, Prophecy, Singing, and the like. All Nations have their *Lymphaticks* of some kind or another; and all Churches (Heathen as well as Christian) have had their Complaints against Fanaticism.

ONE wou'd think, the Antients imagin'd this Disease had some relation to that which they call'd *Hydrophoby*.

phoby. Whether the antient *Lymphaticks* had any way like that of biting to communicate the Rage of their Distemper, I can't so positively determine. But certain Fanaticks there have been since the time of the Antients, who have had a most prosperous Faculty of communicating the Appetite of the Teeth. For since first the Snappish Spirit got up in Religion, all Sects have been at it, as they say, *Tooth and Nail*; and are never better pleas'd than in worrying one another without mercy.

SO far indeed the innocent kind of Fanaticism extends it self, that when the Party is struck by the Apparition, there follows always an Itch of imparting it, and kindling the same fire in other Breasts. For thus Poets are Fanaticks too. And thus *Horace* either is, or feigns himself *Lymphatick*, and shews what an Effect

Effect the Vision of the Nymphs and Bacchus had on him.

*Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus
Vidi docentem, credite posteri,
NYMPHASque discentes,———
Evæ! recenti mens trepidat metu,
Plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum
LYMPHATUR———* as
Heinsius reads: *Od.* 19. *L.* 2.

NO Poet (as I ventur'd to say at first to your Lordship) can do any thing great in his own way, without the Imagination or Supposition of a Divine Presence, which may raise him to some degree of this Passion we are speaking of. Even the cold *Lucretius* makes use of Inspiration, when he writes against it; and is forc'd to raise an Apparition of Nature, in a Divine Form, to animate and conduct him in his very Work of degrading Nature, and despoiling

despoiling her of all her seeming
Wisdom and Divinity.

*Alma Venus, cœli subter labentia signa
Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugi
ferenteis*

Concelebras—————

*Quæ quoniam rerum naturam sola gu-
bernas,*

*Nec sine te quidquam dias in luminis
oras*

*Exoritur, neque fit letum neque ama-
bile quidquam :*

*Te sociam studeo scribundis versibus
esse,*

*Quos Ego de rerum natura pangere
conor*

Memmiadæ nostro. Lucret. L. 1.

THE only thing I wou'd infer
from all this is, that *Enthusiasm* is
wonderfully powerful and extensive;
that it is a matter of nice Judg-
ment, and the hardest thing in the
world

world to know fully and distinctly ; since even Atheism is not exempt from it. For, as some have well remark'd, there have been Enthusiastical Atheists. Nor can Divine Inspiration, by its outward Marks, be easily distinguish'd from it. For Inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and Enthusiasm a false one. But the Passion they raise is much alike. For when the Mind is taken up in Vision, and fixes its view either on any real Object, or mere Spectre of Divinity ; when it sees, or thinks it sees any thing prodigious, and more than human ; its Horror, Delight, Confusion, Fear, Admiration, or whatever Passion belongs to it, or is uppermost on this occasion, will have something vast, *immane*, and (as Painters say) *beyond Life*. And this is what gave occasion to the name of *Fanaticism*, as it was us'd by the Antients in its original

L

ginal Sense, for an Apparition transporting the Mind.

SOMETHING there will be of Extravagance and Fury, when the Ideas or Images receiv'd are too big for the narrow human Vessel to contain. So that Inspiration may be justly call'd Divine Enthusiasm : For the Word it self signifies Divine Presence, and was made use of by the Philosopher whom the earliest Christian Fathers call'd Divine, to express whatever was sublime in human Passions. This was the Spirit he allotted to Heroes, Statesmen, Poets, Orators, Musicians, and even Philosophers themselves. Nor can we, of our own accord, forbear ascribing to a noble Enthusiasm, whatever is greatly perform'd in any of these ways. So that we all of us know something of this Principle. But to know it as we shou'd do, and discern

discern it in its several kinds, both in our selves, and others ; this is the great Work, and by this means alone we can hope to avoid Delusion. For *to judg the Spirits whether they are of God*, we must first *judg our own Spirit* ; whether it be of *Reason*, and *sound Sense* ; whether it be fit to *judg* at all, by being sedate, cool, and impartial ; free of every byassing Passion, every giddy Vapor, or melancholy Fume. This is the first Knowledg and previous Judgment : to understand *our selves*, and know *what Spirit we are of*. Afterwards we may judg the *Spirit* in others, consider what their personal Merit is, and prove the Validity of their Testimony by the Solidity of their Brain. By this means we may prepare our selves with some Antidote against Enthusiasm. And this is what I have dar'd affirm is best perform'd by keeping to *Good Humor*. For otherwise the
Remedy

Remedy it self may turn to the Disease.

AND now, my Lord, having after all, in some measure, justify'd *Enthusiasm*, and own'd the Word ; if I appear extravagant, in addressing to you after the manner I have done, you must allow me to plead an *Impulse*. You must suppose me (as with truth you may) most passionately yours ; and with that Kindness which is natural to you on other occasions, you must tolerate your Enthusiastick Friend, who excepting only in the case of this over-forward Zeal, can never but appear, with the highest Respect,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Faithful

and most Obedient

Humble Servant,

